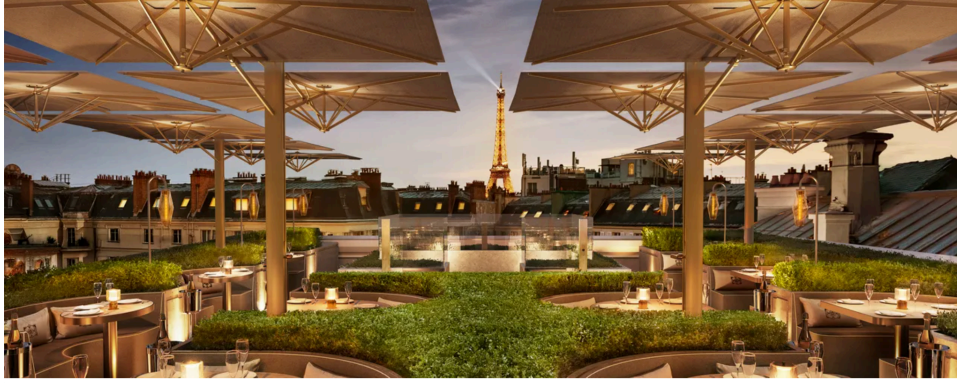




The rooftop at Paris's new RH flagship boasts views of the Eiffel Tower, Grand Palais, and the Louvre from its spot on the Champs-Élysées. Courtesy of RH

A Disappearing Elevator is the Star of RH's New Paris Flagship

The brand's glittering addition to the Champs-Élysées offers sweeping views and a surprise by Foster + Partners

By Katherine McGrath

October 6, 2025

One of the most striking features of the new RH gallery in Paris sits not on the showroom floor, but rather on the rooftop. There, guests can order caviar and seafood towers at the open-air restaurant while witnessing a bit of engineering magic. At one end of the terrace, a sleek glass-and-brass elevator car emerges from two trap doors inside a discreet glass vestibule, popping up as if out of thin air. It deposits or collects its passengers before swiftly vanishing back below the surface, leaving no trace of its existence. Ooh la la! A retractable elevator that appears and disappears on a luxurious rooftop restaurant—this is the kind of theatrical design flourish that makes RH stand out in Paris.



The glass-and-brass elevator also serves as the focal point of RH Gallery's gilded atrium. Courtesy of RH

Designed by AD100 architecture firm [Foster + Partners](#), the innovative system was born of necessity. As Sarah Wai—a partner with the firm who worked on the project—explains, a conventional elevator with a permanent rooftop enclosure would have been visible from the Champs-Élysées and blocked the sightline to the Eiffel Tower—and would not have been permitted under the zoning constraints in the prestigious location.

“To address these challenges, we collaborated with manufacturers to develop a retractable lift that rises only when needed and disappears seamlessly when not in use,” explains Wai. While this type of elevator design has been used in private European residences, this is the first of its kind in Paris to be installed in a public space.



Another view of the elevator from the rooftop dining area. Courtesy of RH



The motif-laced front gates to the Paris gallery. Courtesy of RH

The elevator reflects the ambition behind RH’s Parisian venture, which opened in September [during Paris Design Week](#). Launching an opulent American furniture gallery in the design capital of the world is certainly a bold move—but it’s one the industry has come to expect from Gary Friedman, the brand’s famously ambitious chairman & CEO. The gilded new RH gallery is the latest outpost in the American luxury furniture and hospitality brand’s European expansion, following openings in England, Germany, Spain, and Belgium. Early next year will bring galleries in London and Milan.

In Paris, Foster + Partners was responsible not only for the ingenious rooftop mechanics, but also for enhancing the building’s historic architecture throughout. The 1983 building, which formerly housed an Abercrombie & Fitch, is one of the few free-standing structures on the Champs-Élysées. The building boasts herringbone floors, gilded ceilings, 20-foot-tall bronze and cast medallion doors, and heritage-protected, gold-leaf-tipped iron gates.



The entrance is flanked by cast medallion doors that stand nearly 20 feet tall. Courtesy of RH



Le Jardin at RH serves steak sandwiches, seafood towers, pear Martinis, and more classics influenced by American and Mediterranean cuisine. Courtesy of RH

RH expanded the building's windows to flood the space with natural light, created a free-standing structure for their interior design studio in the courtyard, and placed a glass-and-brass dome atop the store's second restaurant, Le Jardin RH (located the second floor), to echo the glass roof of the nearby Grand Palais.

With its disappearing elevator and other design marvels, RH Paris proves that even in a city built on centuries of design excellence, there's still room for innovation—and that quintessential American hospitality.